

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for fabricating a duct reinforcing rod, said apparatus comprising:
positioning means for establishing a relative insertion position between a conduit and a threaded element, said positioning means including a pair of opposed tube pushers which hold said conduit relative to said threaded element;
insertion means for inserting said threaded element a predetermined distance into said conduit, said insertion means employing said tube pushers to insert said threaded element into said conduit; and
deformation means for deforming said conduit such that said deformation occurs at two locations on said conduit, wherein said two locations are longitudinally spaced from one another along a length of said conduit for fixing said threaded element in place inside said conduit.
2. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:
said deformations occur on either side of said threaded element.
3. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:
said positioning means positions said conduit in a vertical direction.
4. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein:
said positioning means includes a gear mechanism for selectively translating said conduit in a vertical direction and onto said threaded element, thereby inserting said threaded element within said conduit.
5. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein:
said gear mechanism is a rack and pinion assembly.

6. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein:
said deformation means include a pair of crimping blocks that move in a direction substantially perpendicular to said vertical direction.
7. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein:
said crimping blocks move in opposition to one another, thereby selectively bearing upon an exterior of said conduit and imprinting said deformations on said exterior.
8. (Withdrawn) The ~~duct reinforcing rod and fabrication~~ apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:
said positioning means ~~for positioning~~ positions said conduit in a horizontal direction.
9. (Withdrawn) The ~~duct reinforcing rod and fabrication~~ apparatus according to claim 8, wherein:
said positioning means ~~for positioning~~ includes a clamping station having a pair of clamping arms which selectively close about and positionally fix said conduit against movement.
10. (Withdrawn) The ~~duct reinforcing rod and fabrication~~ apparatus according to claim 9, wherein:
said clamping arms move in opposition to one another.
11. (Withdrawn) The ~~duct reinforcing rod and fabrication~~ apparatus according to claim 9, wherein:
said deformation means ~~for deformation~~ include a crimping station having a pair of crimping arms that move in opposition to one another, thereby selectively bearing upon an exterior of said conduit and imprinting said deformations on said exterior.

12. (Withdrawn) The ~~duct reinforcing rod and fabrication~~ apparatus according to claim 11, wherein:
said clamping station is pneumatically actuated; and
said crimping station is pneumatically actuated.
13. (Withdrawn) The ~~duct reinforcing rod and fabrication~~ apparatus according to claim 11, wherein:
said insertion means ~~for inserting~~ includes a linearly displacement element for pushing said threaded element into said conduit.
14. (Withdrawn) The ~~duct reinforcing rod and fabrication~~ apparatus according to claim 13, wherein:
said insertion means ~~for inserting~~ includes a feeding device for placing said threaded element in an operative position opposite said conduit.
15. (Withdrawn) The ~~duct reinforcing rod and fabrication~~ apparatus according to claim 14, wherein:
said [[a]] linearly displacement element is a solenoid; and
said feeding device is a vertically oriented feeding track that holds said threaded element therein for gravity feed to said operative position.
- 16-20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for fabricating duct reinforcing rods, said apparatus comprising:

- a rack-and-pinion mechanism;

- a pair of tube pushers disposed on either side of a length of conduit, said tube pushers being driven by the rack-and-pinion mechanism to force the length of conduit in a substantially vertical motion over a threaded element, for positioning the threaded element inside the length of conduit; and

- a pair of crimper slide blocks each having at least one angled crimper, wherein the crimper slide blocks are brought to bear upon the exterior surface of the conduit, after the threaded element is positioned inside the length of conduit, for said angled crimpers to create deformations in the conduit on either side of said threaded element, thereby fixing the threaded element in place inside the length of conduit.

22. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for fabricating duct reinforcing rods, said apparatus comprising:

- a support base that supports a length of conduit in a generally horizontal orientation;

- a clamping station positioned opposite the support base, said clamping station having a pair of clamping arms that hold the length of conduit in position against the support base;

- a feeder unit for automatically positioning a threaded element in alignment with an open end of the length of conduit;

- an insertion device that urges the threaded element a designated distance into the length of conduit, subsequent to the length of conduit being held in place by the clamping arms of the clamping station; and

- a crimping station aligned with the clamping station, said crimping station having at least one pair of crimping arms for creating deformations in the length of conduit on either side of the threaded element positioned therein, thereby fixing the threaded element in place inside the length of conduit.